



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

March 10, 1983

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT LETTER No. 83-2 (511)

Subject: Classification Guides

We are concerned that there have been some bureau classification guidelines developed recently which exceed considerably the acceptable uses of "guides". The guides to which I refer are actually extensions of approved and binding OPM classification standards. As a result of the implementation of such documents, unsubstantiated grade increases appear to have taken place. It is essential that a clear distinction be made and understood between "guides" and single-agency supplements to existing published standards. Guides are not to be construed as official classification standards. Their sole purpose is (1) to provide clarification of grade level standards already in being or (2) to provide more specific evaluation criteria in those instances where a series has been recognized and an explanatory fly-sheet published, but no grade level criteria have been established, e.g., the GS-430 Botany Series. At no other time is a classification guide warranted or permissible.

A single-agency supplement, on the other hand, is an accepted vehicle by which more specific evaluation criteria which relates to a particular agency can be developed to amplify an existent broad-based, governmentwide classification standard. Such supplements require formal Departmental and OPM approval prior to issuance and once approved by OPM, become official standards for use within the originating agency under the authority of Title IV of the Classification Act of 1949, as amended. This subject is treated in full on page 8 of the OPM Classification Handbook, Section I - General Information Concerning Position Classification Standards.

The current 370 DM 511 rewrite will cover the subject of classification guides, but in order to prevent any further development of unauthorized or inappropriate classification guides, I am calling this matter to your immediate attention. All classification guides or single-agency supplements will be submitted to this Office for review and approval before official action or notification of proposed change of any kind will be taken.

Director of Personnel

INQUIRIES:

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